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UNCLAS ANTANANARIVO 000439

SENSITIVE  
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ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU  
DEPT FOR AF/E, AF/FO, DS/IP/AF  
PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHER  
PRETORIA FOR POLCOUNS

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SUBJECT: ANJOUAN ISLAND ELECTIONS CALM, RUNOFF SCHEDULED

REF: ANTANANARIVO 347 AND PREVIOUS

¶1. (U) Official results from the Anjouan island presidential elections released by the Constitutional Court (CC) on June 18 show candidates Mohamed Djaanfari and Moussa Toybou well ahead of the other three candidates. Djaanfari won 44.18 percent of the vote, while Toybou came in a close second with 40.12 percent. With no candidate over 50 percent, a runoff election will take place on June 29. Voter turnout was modest at 42.8 percent of the approximately 128,000 registered voters.

¶2. (U) Observing on the ground in Anjouan, the DCM reported the first round of island presidential elections on Anjouan June 15 were free, fair, and transparent overall, with the exception of minor tension and a late start in ousted Colonel Mohamed Bacar's home village of Barakani. In addition, claims of irregularities in Toybou's stronghold of Nioumakele appear to have been upheld by the CC in overturning the preliminary results that had Toybou ahead by less than 100 votes. The other three candidates scored well only in their home villages and all tallied less than five percent of the votes.

¶3. (U) International election observers from the Arab League, the International Organization of the Francophonie, the African Union (AU), the Indian Ocean Commission, and U.S. Embassy Antananarivo circulated while Tanzanian, Sudanese and Comoran troops effectively maintained calm and order. Noting that the process was characterized by calm and discipline, the head of the AU Commission, Jean Ping, congratulated the Anjouanese people "for their maturity during the entire period of the electoral campaign." In a formal statement issued June 18, Ping also commended the Comoran National Army, supported by the AU Electoral and Security Assistance Mission to the Comoros (MAES), for maintaining security throughout the electoral process; thanked bilateral and multilateral partners for their financial support for the first round of the election; and appealed for continued assistance through the second round.

¶4. (U) Toybou is an engineer, not a politician, believed to be in his 40s. While Union President Ahmed Abdallah Sambi has not formally endorsed either candidate, he is widely believed to support Toybou. Approximately 60 years old, Djaanfari, a retired member of the French Army now turned businessman with interests in maritime transport, was a losing candidate in the 2006 elections on Anjouan for Union President.

¶5. (SBU) COMMENT: The runoff between Djaanfari and Toybou will likely be an extremely close call, decided by several variables. One will be an ability to attract voters from the camps of the three losers. Another will be an ability to motivate abstaining voters to come to the polls and produce a less disappointing turnout. We have

no evidence that this election was anything other than free and fair and expect the sequel to be equally transparent. However, especially if the outcome is very close, the loser is almost certain to claim foul. A decisive victory by either candidate would clearly be preferable at this stage of Comoran democracy to a razor-thin outcome, but that will be up to the voters to decide... END  
COMMENT.  
MARQUARDT